

Council concerned with future growth

by J.D. Stetson

The Thermopolis Town Council discussed at length a proposal to tie the South Thermopolis Water District to a water line being built by Owl Creek Water District west of town during its May 22 meeting.

The Owl Creek water line connects to a new town water line installed during the town's recent water tank project. The Wyoming Water Development Commission (WWDC) recently proposed a connection with South Thermopolis Water and Sewer District in order to reduce costs involved in the South Thermopolis upgrade and renovation project.

The proposal also would eliminate the town's current connection to the South Thermopolis District along Highway 20 South.

The connection of Owl Creek's line with the South Thermopolis line has the potential to benefit the town, but also there are some drawbacks, said Mayor's Assistant Fred Crosby.

Crosby said the proposed line connecting South Thermopolis could help the town do away with the Cedar Ridge water storage tank, which is an older tank that has had problems in the past and would require major maintenance in the future.

The project could also allow the town to address water pressure issues along 14th Street and near Meadowlark Lane.

For South Thermopolis, the project is beneficial because the district would no longer be required to build a new tank and pump station as part of its upgrade project.

A drawback to the town would be the increased cost of electricity to pump water to the new tanks west of Roundtop, Crosby said. The WWDC has suggested the town address the issue of increased costs when negotiating the contract with South Thermopolis to provide water along the new line.

Town Clerk Tracey Van Heule also reminded the council of the cost of depreciation on the lines if the town takes ownership of them.

Public Works Director Ernie Slagle stated the need to complete maintenance and replacement of a line along 14th Street before the proposal takes effect.

Town ownership

Crosby stated he had stressed the importance of the town to have ownership of the lines.

Under the proposal, the town

would own the Owl Creek line up to where South Thermopolis connects to the system. The town would then own the line running south until it connects with the rest of the South Thermopolis system.

Owl Creek representative Bart Bader said at the meeting that the Owl Creek district supports the proposal and has no problem turning ownership of the line over to the town.

Heath Overfield, of Engineering Associates, represented the South Thermopolis district in bringing the proposal to the council.

Crosby said prior meetings with the WWDC and both districts indicated the town's decision whether to support the proposal or not may have bearing on future funds allocated to the town from the WWDC for other water projects.

Councilman Tom Linnan motioned to proceed with the proposal because he did not think the town had much choice other than to go along with the WWDC's proposal.

Annexation

During the discussion, Councilman Dick Hall brought up the issue of annexation with regard to future growth of the town.

Hall reasoned that the town's growth is slowly heading into stagnation because areas likely to be annexed would already have the necessary utilities the town provides within reach of the proposed lines.

Crosby said one of the reasons the town is insisting on ownership of the lines is in order for the town to control the growth that may occur along the lines.

The town has entertained annexation south of the town in the past, along the commercial districts adjacent to Highway 20 South. Annexation was not possible because the town would be taking the majority of the South Thermopolis large water users, and it would not have been feasible for the district to survive without those users.

Overfield said the proposal may benefit the town with future annexations because of the closure of the connection on Highway 20 South and the expansion of the district.

The council passed a motion to start the process to annex portions of land west of Thermopolis between the existing town limits and the proposed water lines.



Cindy Toth presents Taylor Cornwell with a purple flower during the Class of 2012 Hot Springs County High School Graduation Ceremony Sunday in the high school gym. Toth,

who is retiring as high school librarian after this year, provided the commencement speech during the ceremony.

— J.D. Stetson photo

HSCHS graduates walk the stage for final achievement

by J.D. Stetson

The Hot Springs County High School senior class ended their high school career with flair and poetry Sunday during the Class of 2012 Graduation Ceremony.

The former students, now graduates, marched to the beat of "Pomp & Circumstance," took their seats and kicked off the ceremony with a rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner," performed by the high school choir.

Senior class president Maggie Paris introduced salutatorian Zach Anderson, who gave a heartfelt speech dedicating his many high school accomplishments to his mother, Karen Hitchens. Co-valedictorian Anja Abbott gave a brief address.

Paris followed with her co-valedictorian speech, which featured a solo performance of the White Stripes song "We're Going to Be Friends."

Highlighting the ceremony was commencement speaker Cindy Toth's humorous and heartfelt advice and well wishes for the class.

"I have watched most of you grow from little freshmen to the young adults that you are today, and you hold a special spot in my heart because you have been my class for the past four years," Toth said.

Toth, who is retiring from her post as high school librarian after this year, wrote a poem titled "Class of 2012," and read it during her speech.

Here are highlights from the poem; the entire poem can be read online at www.thermopir.com:

*Class of 2012, I see you sitting there
Full of anticipation and very aware
That your high school years
Have flown quickly by with laughter, fun,
and many cheers.*

*Families, friends, school staff too,
The people who care so much about you
Are here to watch you cross the stage
To pick up a diploma, your accomplishments gauge.*

*Now, Class of 2012, you move on to new things
And begin to delve into the responsibilities that adult life brings.
In some ways you are ready, in some you will learn more
Than you really ever knew before.*

*Life is not always easy; but is oh, so good.
If you enjoy it all, but do as you should*

*Life will be a journey – a marvelous quest
In life be kind; pay attention; do your best.*

*Now –
I leave you with these thoughts:
This is the end, but also the beginning!
Good luck, Have fun, Be good. Keep reading!
I will miss seeing you every day. You have been so much fun! And thank you for the memories!*

Following Toth's speech, the choir took the stage again and performed "For Good" by Stephen Schwartz.

Hot Springs County High School Principal Jason McArthur introduced Superintendent Dustin Hunt, and Hot Springs County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees members Elizabeth Mahoney, Joe Martinez, Travis Bomengen, Karen Leyba and Tom Sullivan Jr.

Trustees Hub Whitt and Clay VanAntwerp were not able to attend the ceremony.

McArthur, Hunt and the trustees delivered diplomas and Toth gave each student a flower as they were called to the stage, one-by-one.

The ceremony wrapped with brief comments from McArthur before he presented the Class of 2012.

Relay for Life Purse Auction



Michael Byrd carries Cade Zupan while auctioneer John Holm checks out a purse during the Relay for Life Purse Auction Friday night at the Hot Springs County Fair-

grounds. The various Thermopolis Relay for Life teams participating in the event raised \$6,592.63 during the auction.

— J.D. Stetson photo

Memorial Day services hosted by local VFW

The Hot Springs County Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 2281, has planned a series of services to commemorate service men and women, past and present, for the Memorial Day holiday on Monday.

The day's activities will begin at 11 a.m. with a service at

Monument Hill Cemetery.

At 11:30 a.m., a service will be held at Riverside Cemetery, followed by an additional observance at the Park Street Bridge at noon.

The public is invited to attend and join the observance of the national holiday.

Early deadline for May 31 issue of IR

The Independent Record office will be closed on Monday, May 28 in recognition of Memorial Day.

The deadline for classified, display and legal advertising in the May 31 issue is 4 p.m. Friday, May 25. The IR office will be open until 5 p.m. on that day.

The deadline for editorial/news content for the May 31 issue is noon Tuesday, May 29.